



Wayland, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1866.

Dear Mr. Higginson,

I have been absent from home more than a fortnight, and your letter arrived after I left; otherwise, I should have answered it sooner.

You are laboring under a mistake. I did not prompt the article in the Commonwealth to which you allude, and I greatly disliked it. I had never before heard of the allegation against Private Mills. I never made any allusion to Col. Trowbridge, direct or indirect; either in newspaper article, letters, or private conversation. The Commonwealth has got its ideas from some other source than my communications.

All I have done about General Devens is simply this. I told, in the New York Independent, the story of what he did concerning Thomas Sims; simply



stating the facts, almost without comment -  
ary, excepting the concluding remark that  
I thought the proceeding indicated a noble  
character. "The Commonwealth" alluded  
sneeringly to "Mrs L. Maria Child's  
elaborate eulogium upon Gen. Devens."  
I passed it by unnoticed. Soon after, they  
sent me another attack upon Gen. Devens,  
marked. Having occasion to write to them  
about an advertisement, at the close of a  
merely business letter I wrote something  
to this effect: "I am personally unacquaint-  
-ed with Gen. Devens, and know nothing  
of the merits of the affair in question; but  
I should require a good deal of proof that  
a man who showed so much kindness  
toward Thomas Sims would intentionally  
do any wrong toward the freed men, or  
the colored soldiers. I think it likely there  
was some difficulty in the case unknown  
to us; perhaps created by legal fictions.  
Judge Hoar of Concord tells me he has  
been intimate with Gen. Devens for



years, and that he knows him to be a man  
of a noble heart." They published this  
extract from a private letter, much to my  
surprise and regret. Somebody sent it to  
Gen. Devens. Whereupon, he wrote me a  
letter explanatory of his conduct, and en-  
closing six or eight Military Orders, showing  
that his course toward the colored people was  
studiously impartial. I sent some of those  
Military Orders to the "Commonwealth," accom-  
panied by an extract from Gen. Devens's  
letter to me, in which he stated that to allow  
subordinate officers to hang men, without  
judge or jury, would be a poor way to protect  
his soldiers, black or white; and furthermore  
that the man who was supposed to be murder-  
ed was alive and well. I simply wrote  
that, without any remarks of my own. They  
did not see fit to publish that plain state-  
ment, but did publish the article which  
you supposed to be prompted by me; but  
which was entirely new to me, and extreme-  
ly distasteful. Gen. Saxton  
writes; "I consider Gen. Devens' course in



<sup>Mrs. Child (Devens)</sup>  
S. C. as extremely wise and impartial.  
I have received at his hands uniform  
and efficient aid." The Superinten-  
-ent of the Freed men's Bureau in S. C.  
testifies that "Gen. Devens has been very  
patient in listening to the complaints of the  
freed men, prompt in redressing their  
grievances, and kind in administering to  
their necessities."

I do not agree with your estimate of his  
offer to redeem Sims. I do not think one  
man in ten thousand would have done it,  
I had not written to him, or caused any one  
else to write to him. I did write to Judge  
Loring, who was receiving a large salary  
from the U. S. and he did not offer me  
a single cent. I wrote to Mayor Bigelow,  
and he sent me \$20, which I afterward  
returned, because Charles Devens volunteered  
to pay the whole \$1800. I am not acquai-  
-ed with him, and never expect to be. I have  
not the slightest tinge of partisan feeling with  
regard to him; but I honor him for that deed,  
and for his promptitude in going <sup>to the</sup> rescue of  
our imperilled country.  
Respectfully & cordially, L. Maria Child.

Ms. A. 9.1.37.17

